

**To:** Cristiano, Gina[Cristiano.Gina@epa.gov]  
**Cc:** robert\_f\_stewart@ios.doi.gov[robert\_f\_stewart@ios.doi.gov]; Myers, Craig[Myers.Craig@epa.gov]; McComb, Martin[McComb.Martin@epa.gov]; Ackerman, Joyce[Ackerman.Joyce@epa.gov]  
**From:** Wegrzyn, John  
**Sent:** Fri 8/7/2015 12:23:51 PM  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Release to Animas River

Yeah, I was thinking about a CERCLA site-specific technical assistance agreement and mis-spoke and called it a PRFA. Apologies. .... j.

**John G. Wegrzyn, PhD**  
**Natural Resource Injury / Spills Coordinator**  
**USFWS Region 6**  
**Phone: 303.236.4261**  
**Fax: 303.236.0027**

On Thu, Aug 6, 2015 at 8:09 PM, Cristiano, Gina <[Cristiano.Gina@epa.gov](mailto:Cristiano.Gina@epa.gov)> wrote:

This promptly got buried in my inbox this morning as things spun up...thanks for sharing Bob!

Craig/Marty/Joyce-see info that FWS was relaying this morning (much you have heard or know but wanted to share).

John, also wanted to relay, we cannot issue a PRFA because this is not an oil spill (we only have PRFA authority under oil). However, that should not stop FWS from getting an NRDA PRFA/account through whatever channels you do this for CERCLA because it is a hazardous substance release.

We can plan to have a call tomorrow, I just need to see what time all the other calls are happening (we tried to nail down the schedule tonight but got some last minute changes). More soon, G

**From:** Robert Stewart [mailto:[robert\\_f\\_stewart@ios.doi.gov](mailto:robert_f_stewart@ios.doi.gov)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 06, 2015 10:10 AM  
**To:** Cristiano, Gina  
**Subject:** FW: Release to Animas River

FYI

**From:** Wegrzyn, John [mailto:[john\\_wegrzyn@fws.gov](mailto:john_wegrzyn@fws.gov)]

**Sent:** Thursday, August 06, 2015 7:32 AM

**To:** Laura Archuleta; Drue DeBerry; Robert Stewart

**Cc:** Brian Sanchez; Panayota Stueber; Donna Lakamp; Barb Osmundson; Ann Timberman; Patricia Bergstrom; Eileen Lindgren; Ellen Szczesny; Barry Forsythe; Maria Boroja; Michael Thabault

**Subject:** Re: Release to Animas River

Laura, Dru, and Bob, Brian phoned me at approx 06:50 this morning and here is the info he related to me:

- Yesterday (Wednesday, August 5) EPA and Colorado Department of Natural Resources -Division of Reclamation and Mine Safety (CO-DRMS) were apparently doing some exploratory work on an adit to the Gold King Mine on Cement Creek in southeastern CO.

- The Gold King Mine is an old abandoned mine. (The CO-DRMS has a program for assessing and working with abandoned mines within the state. They are assisted by EPA Region 8 in this work.)

- Something the work crew was involved with may have influenced an estimated slug release of 1M gal of contaminated mine water that flowed from the Gold King Mine adit being worked, on into Cement Creek and further on into the Animas River. Brian said he was given info that the Animas River turned red from the contaminated mine water entering it. Reportedly there were no serious injuries to the work crew.

- Brian, Barry Forsythe (FWS National Oil Spills Coordinator), and Sherry Skipper (FWS Liaison to EPA Region 8) were all working together with EPA on a sampling exercise related to a different project in the general geographical area. Brian learned of the release Wednesday evening at approx 19:00. I received a mobile phone text message from Barry notifying me of this hazmat release at 19:02 Wednesday evening.

- EPA personnel and resources are involved with further assessing the Gold King Mine situation and taking samples for evaluating the nature and extent of environmental contamination. At least some of the samples will be delivered to EPA's lab in Golden, CO for processing.

- Brian was unaware at the time he called me this morning as to whom this incident has been reported (i.e. NRC, EPA Region 8 Hotline, CDPHE, etc.)

- Brian will return to completing his initial task today, which involves environmental sampling work unrelated to the Gold King Mine incident, but he will keep us informed as he learns more. Presumably, we also may receive further info from others associated with the Gold King Mine incident as well other DOI/FWS folks.

Laura and Brian fyi, given what we currently know at this time and since we're near the end of the pay period, lets plan for the moment for CO ES FO folks to charge their initial time, materials, and travel-related costs for our efforts on this hazmat release to FXHC1130SR960 156 FF0E24000. That way we can keep track of the costs for initial efforts for the time being.

At this point we currently know that this potential hazmat release involves an abandoned mine and there may be no viable PRP. It doesn't yet appear we have a lot of effort spent on this emergency incident to this point and, unless EPA Region 8 opens a PRFA, we won't have any place from which to be reimbursed for our initial response costs. If a PRFA is issued by EPA and they allow us to charge against it we can get a reimbursable account set up and then RDS our initial 1130SR charges back to where they need to go after we have further information.

Please contact me if you have questions or wish to discuss this item further.  
Thanks very much for your consideration. .... j.

**John G. Wegrzyn, PhD**

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On Wed, Aug 5, 2015 at 7:58 PM, Laura Archuleta <[laura\\_archuleta@fws.gov](mailto:laura_archuleta@fws.gov)> wrote:

Got it. Glad the crew is down there already!

Laura Archuleta

Contaminants Specialist

ES - Colorado Field Office

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On Aug 5, 2015, at 7:22 PM, Wegrzyn, John <[john\\_wegrzyn@fws.gov](mailto:john_wegrzyn@fws.gov)> wrote:

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Barry Forsythe** <[barry\\_forsythe@fws.gov](mailto:barry_forsythe@fws.gov)>

Date: Wednesday, August 5, 2015

Subject: Release to Animas River

To: John Wegrzyn <[john\\_wegrzyn@fws.gov](mailto:john_wegrzyn@fws.gov)>, Maria Boroja

<[Maria\\_Boroja@fws.gov](mailto:Maria_Boroja@fws.gov)>

Cc: Holly Herod <[holly\\_herod@fws.gov](mailto:holly_herod@fws.gov)>, "brian\_sanchez@fws.gov"

<[brian\\_sanchez@fws.gov](mailto:brian_sanchez@fws.gov)>

I'm up here helping EPA sample the Animas floodplain. This afternoon, there was an incident that caused a release of an estimated 1 million gallons of highly contaminated mine water to Cement Creek and ultimately Animas River. EPA OSC is here and their contractors are sampling water from Silverton to Durango.

Brian Sanchez is here as well.

My info is only second hand at this point.

Barry

Sent from my iPhone

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**John G. Wegrzyn, PhD**

**Natural Resource Injury / Spills Coordinator**

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